

Climate protesters shut down world's largest coal port

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An activist is seen hanging from a piece of equipment during a protest at the Port of Newcastle in New South Wales, Australia, November 16, 2021; (R) FILE PHOTO. © Facebook / Blockade Australia / screenshot; Reuters / Daniel Munoz

Sydney, November 18 (RHC)-- Two climate activists in Australia have brought the world's busiest coal port to a halt, strapping themselves to a massive piece of machinery and refusing to come down. The protest action follows more than a week of similar actions.

Blockade Australia, a climate group focused on "strategic direct action," declared that two of its members had clambered atop equipment at the Port of Newcastle and stopped work there late on Tuesday night,

sharing footage captured by the activists as they suspended themselves from a large loading machine.

“Zianna and Hannah have shut down Newcastle coal port, abseiling from coal handling machinery. The port cannot resume operations until the pair are removed by police,” the group said, identifying the activists by their first names only, adding: “This is the tenth consecutive day of disruption to Newcastle coal port and its supply rail network.”

The daring action follows at least 16 similar actions over the last week or so, the group said, some targeting the rail line near the port, the world’s largest for coal exports.

The disruptions have drawn the ire of state officials, with New South Wales’ Environment Minister Matt Kean calling them “completely out of line” and urging police to “throw the book” at the protesters, at least 19 of whom have already been arrested so far this month, according to ABC.

The activists could face charges that carry maximum sentences of 25 years in prison, NSW’s police commissioner Mick Fuller said, noting that local law enforcement has created a “strike force” to deal with future disturbances at the port.

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